

**IRMC Extended Learning Opportunities Subcommittee**  
**DRAFT Meeting Minutes**

November 21, 2019

5:00 - 6:30 PM

Collette Education Resource Center, Conference Room A  
35 Commerce Way, Dover, DE 19904

*The IRMC Extended Learning Opportunities Subcommittee is established to oversee coordination, research, and planning statewide for before and after school and summer learning programs for school-age children and advise the General Assembly and the Governor.*

**Attendees:** Candice Buchanan, John Hulse, Dan Shelton, Alison Tingle, Bill Doolittle, Regina Sidney-Brown, Meredith Seitz, Tiyana Prince, Yolanda Rushdan, Rosalia Martinez, Kerry Stahl, Pat Scruggs, John Kowalko, Connie Merlet, Tina Shockley

The Chair started the first meeting of the Extended Learning Opportunities Subcommittee at 5:06 p.m. and all members introduced themselves, as well as those attending from the public. The Chair discussed the handouts, including the agenda, copy of House Substitute 1 for House Bill 92 as amended by House Amendment 1, the subcommittee membership list and the Interagency Resource Management Committee (IRMC) meeting schedule. The Chair explained that the IRMC was the larger committee which is over this subcommittee, and that ELOS members were invited to attend IRMC meetings, but that it was not mandatory. She noted Tina Shockley would send everyone these dates as calendar invites. The Chair noted that the ELOS meeting schedule would be discussed later in the meeting.

The Chair explained that members need to determine what is the scope of the work around extended learning opportunities that we want to undertake, what has been done to date and where do we want to start. Likewise, longer term goals need to be established.

The Chair's [PowerPoint presentation](#) for the meeting covered the mission and goals, and duties of the ELOS as noted in House Substitute 1 for House Bill 92 with House Amendment 1; the definition of "Extended Learning Opportunity Program" and the highlights from the previous Statewide Afterschool Initiative Learning (SAIL) Task Force Report.

In addition to the SAIL Report, it was noted that the Family Services Cabinet Council has done some similar work. The Chair asked members if they knew of any other work currently being done with regard to before and after school care. Members noted that the Middletown-Odessa-

Townsend afterschool network initiative and the extra time/extended day programs to support learning outcomes occurring in Capital School District.

The Delaware Afterschool Network (DEAN) representative noted that they have programs that advocate for all K-12 children, which came into existence as the SAIL Task Force was wrapping up. Most of the programs are community-based or in-school programs. Additionally, they are familiar with small scale project analysis which has helped statewide after school programs. The DEAN has a lot of resources in Delaware and nationally that can be accessed for this subcommittee's work. They have access to technical assistance as well. The Chair noted that we may have DEAN or their representative present such information at a future meeting.

It was also suggested that there are 2000+ childcare centers in the state, and perhaps we could find out how many of those offer before and after care for the kids. It was suggested that Betty Gail Timm at the Office of Child Care Licensing may have this information (*Tina followed up with Betty Gail Timm and found that "most licensed facilities, unless they operate on a half day schedule, provide before and after care. They define before and after care as 6am-8am and 4pm-6pm. While they do not have a way to pull specific data, they note that there are 457 child care centers, 538 family child care programs and 82 large family child care programs in Delaware).*

Members inquired as to how we are defining extended learning, and that we need to take a closer look at this definition. It was suggested that we look at what "extended day" care means too, with the possibility of including workforce development as a part of the afterschool care discussion. Capital School District representatives noted that they have added 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Center Programs (which are federal funds that support local school and community-based organization partners that provide afterschool and summer learning programs to students attending high-poverty, low-performing schools). They rely on this program to be able to provide programming for the extended day. They have seen success from this as it provides kids a reason to stay and the school district a reason to have them stay. Capital has also partnered this with summer programs, CTE pathways to ultimately build a holistic approach to afterschool care.

The Department of Education representative explained that the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Program is about 30 programs in 40 sites. The DOE receives just under \$6 million annually from the federal government. More information is available on the [DDOE 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Programs webpage](#). Recently an annual cohort competition was announced, which will be awarded annually for a five year period (more information can be found [here](#)).

The Chair noted that of all the Delaware 21<sup>st</sup> Century funded programs only one has ever been renewed/extended past the original five years. Many schools, districts, and community organizations rely on these funds and consider them to be sustainable, yet none of the programs are sustained. We need to look past this one individual program to identify more sustainable options so quality extended learning opportunities can remain options for our youth. The Chair inquired as to whether we can actually sustain programs using this fund.

Another member (provider) noted that her business sometimes relies on grants, but there is great competition to get them, they are limited and they ultimately end. She suggested that funding for before and after school care be built into the state budget.

The Chair further noted that we need to make sure we have someone to follow up on those grants or fund programs to ensure sustainability.

The DEAN representative asked what our definition is of a “quality” program. She noted that sustainability needs to be built in from day one.

A Boys and Girls Club of Delaware representative noted that they use Purchase of Care (POC), Delaware Stars. She noted that there is currently a hold on afterschool programs going into Delaware Stars, so those programs don’t get extra funding. They can’t keep up with the requirements of a quality before and after school program because they can’t hire quality staff. She noted that Walmart is paying more than the provider can, and thus staff turnover is high and the early care industry is in crisis.

Another provider agreed that POC funding has not kept pace with the times, and those children attending under POC as the very population we need to reach and serve the most. She agreed the industry is at a crisis level.

Capital School District representative noted that there is a group of children to be served that fall above Head Start level but below POC, and that these are the kids we should be targeting because they are receiving no before or after school programming. There was a call for legislators to address POC.

It was asked if before and after care programs were available for Delaware Stars programs. The answer is yes, and you only had to be a child care provider to get funds. However, Race to the Top funding put a lot of parameters around the use funding for these programs. Additionally a member added that Delaware Stars was started because programs couldn’t afford to become

National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)-certified. Funding became more difficult as more programs came into DE Stars.

Rep. John Kowalko who was attending as a member of the public added that the Race to the Top award occurred when Delaware Stars was created and it allowed \$25 million to Delaware Stars, and programs could earn a higher rating and be compensated for those programs. Since that time, money for early child care has not been replenished. This has caused a conflict within the funding capability of private child care centers. It ignores the fact that private centers are an important economic tool. They assist people who want to work. It allows them to go to work. He encouraged the group to consider the needed cost to fund before/after school programs and suggested the subcommittee present that to the General Assembly to be a separate funding line to ensure a sustainable fund for before and after school programs going forward.

The Chair encouraged the group to narrow down that scope of what it would focus its efforts on. She suggested that we are clear on best practices, and that we need to look at how we use those best practices to move forward. She noted funding was the key.

The DEAN representative suggested we need to get the Market Study Analysis from DHSS, as it may include a cost analysis for before/after school program. It was also suggested that we (1) define “school aged children” – what are the specific ages we are going to focus on. This will allow us to know what ages we want to most serve. We know that the foundation is in birth to kindergarten, so we suggested we need to support that age group; (2) identify what programs are going to look like that we ultimately provide for families, so that we give families and children the most support possible.

It was noted that the Vision Coalition and the Family Services Cabinet Council are two groups that are specifically looking at the Pre-K age group. Another member noted that most services for children are from provided up to age 12. While the DEAN representative noted that typically middle school is where afterschool care services are “dropped” or not available. She suggested the need to educate families on what is available for afterschool care so we can set them up for success.

Capital School District representative noted that their 21<sup>st</sup> Century programs are housed in school and that they are based in community-based organizations. Sometimes this can be an issue.

The Chair suggested that part of our work may be to make sure these entities are communicating and doing what they can to support children and their families. We may need a comprehensive

way for community organizations, schools, and funders to come together. She asked the group what are the best practices we can put in place for this.

One provider noted that there are some kids that we don't even know about because they haven't been in any child care setting (not before or after care).

Another member noted that child care licensing stops at age 12, but before and after care programs go to grade 12. However, there is no way to ensure these programs are licensed, are high-quality or have stability.

Another member noted there are challenges with what services need to be provided (and noted that not everyone may be on the same page with regarding to these items), such as transportation, food programs, tutoring, sports. These issues can make it more difficult to provide a program. It can also be difficult to measure how effective the programs truly are.

Capital School District representative noted that there is an issue with Delaware Stars Programs given that money is going to evaluation and not going to programs for students. While quality is important it shouldn't be the focus, as we really need to ensure more kids are being served by programs. Another member noted that there is too much focus and funding is going to data studies. However, realistically we know that programming requires that data studies be done.

The Chair indicated that there is Title I funding, and suggested how schools/district can use that funding for this work. Someone suggested that only 1% of this funding is used in out-of-school time programs. Capital School District is just one school district studying this. He indicated that studies need to be done to look at other federal funds that are being used for before/after school programs, i.e., opportunity funding. He noted that the RAND report (available in two years) will give us a view of the opportunity funding and student success block grant. In favor of a year or two of data to determine effectiveness, you get to the end of the grant cycle and people start backing out because they won't know if they are funded or not.

Child Care Development Block grants were also mentioned as a consideration for funding afterschool programs, but it was noted that this funding is only going to licensed programs.

Mid-meeting, the Chair summarized the discussion thus far and suggested next steps for the members in terms of where to focus our attention over the next year:

- Look into Funding
- Find current quality programs or "models" and try to replicate them (look within Delaware and nationally)

- Follow up Delaware Afterschool Network may be able to assist with this)
- Professionalizing program standards
  - Determine if there are certification and licensing for before and after school programs. It is believed that there are competencies, but they are old. Consider licensing programs that provide services to those service age 12 and older.
- Are programs really preparing kids for workforce, are they quality, are they helping them with their pathways, helping with family engagement and life success
- What are programs actually providing?
- Define “quality” programs.

It was asked are we to determine standards or make recommendations regarding standards, and will there be different standards for different age levels. The Chair clarified the ELOS will recommend best practices or standards to the Governor’s Office and yes there will be different standards for different levels of programming.

The DEAN representative noted that middle school is a key time to get them interested in pathways in order to prepare them for what they may wish to do in life. It was asked how many programs are using an assessment tool. Another member believes that while some data is missing, we may have some data through tracking preschool programs. If not a school-based preschool program, this data is not tracked, but that might be a good recommendation. Also, maybe we could get some data from reviewing bus/transportation data.

Another member asked who is slipping through the cracks and who is our target audience? We may not be able to serve all children, we have an obligation to serve the children who need before/after school care programs. She suggested the need to get legislators to vote for these programs.

The Chair mentioned feasibility of programs be considered. Also, certified instructors are important and how do we motivate teachers to stay after school or in the summer to carry out these programs. Are there other avenues to get teachers to buy in? It was suggested that we get a cost and look at some research on how to get teachers involved – ultimately determining the feasibility of such programming in Delaware.

Another member would like to see emotional intelligence (trauma, stress, etc.) or The Ruler Approach, included in after school programs, as we need to teach kids about this. It was noted that Teri Lawler at the DOE is doing this work, through trainings. She is working with districts to have children unpack their own challenges and align them with available resources. Also, various school programs are working on emotional intelligence.

In terms of “before” and “after” school programming, what specific time are we considering for our focus/funding. It was suggested we don’t be limited by the clock, but more based on student and community needs.

Towards the end of the meeting, the Chair summarized the discussion and next steps, including:

- Identifying best practices, high quality community and school-based before and after school programs looking at models in Delaware and nationally, and what would it take to replicate
- Identify our target audience – by age, considering community and school-based
- Identify sustainable funding
- Ensure feasibility of programs

The Chair indicated, and members agreed, that we will start to share a document of terms, where members can add their preferred definitions, so we can work on these as a group to come to a consensus on terms.

Next, the subcommittee’s meeting schedule of once monthly was discussed. The next meeting is set for December 17 at 5PM at the Collette Education Building 35 Commerce Way, Dover, DE 19904. Tina will send email reminder of the December meeting date.

The group agreed to meetings on the third Tuesday of the month from 5:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. with a revolving mid-state locale to be convenient for all. Tina will send out a hard copy schedule and send meeting invites electronically to all members.

The Chair reiterated that the IRMC Meeting schedule that was distributed are informational, ELOS members can attend, but it is optional.

The Chair called for public comment, Bill Doolittle who is an advocate for school aged children stated that the statute is using a K-age 21 for “school-age” definition. He encouraged the group to capture this age group and not ignore anyone. He indicated that the efforts here need to be defined as either needs based effort OR resource based efforts. He noted needs based are more successful in his experience. As for funding, opportunity funding grants are 50% continuing and 50% one-time funds. In determining if you want to move forward with a community-based or school-based approach, the best programs he had seen are a blending of both. Extended opportunity means they get it after their regular academic day making it more beneficial. For children in poverty, key component of one study is extended learning opportunities.

Pat Scruggs noted that there are supports for kids with special needs, but no support for student success. She says there needs to be funding and training to keep those kids in programs because they tend to not get individualized support.

Representative Kowalko suggested studying workforce development. He thinks there is a lot to study here, but that we need to think practically. He suggests we present a recommendation that will be supported by funding, which will include special education students and those in poverty.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:33 p.m.